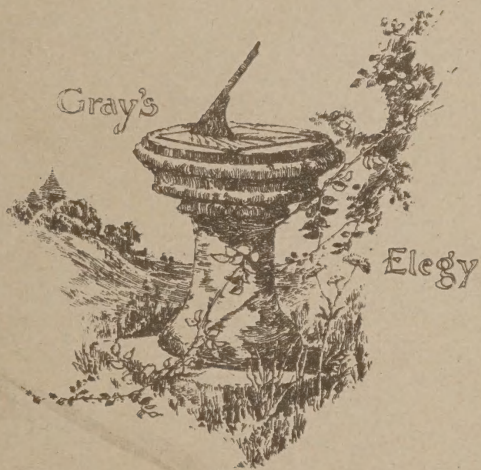




UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS LIBRARY
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
STACKS

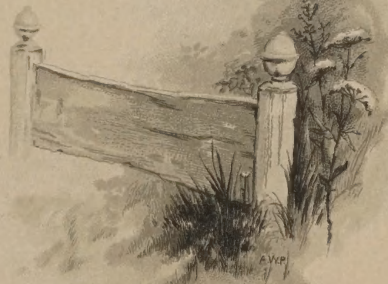




Elegy
written in a
Country
Churchyard
by
Thomas Gray.

Castell Brothers
London E.C.

E. & J. B. YOUNG & Co.
NEW-YORK.





Illustrated
by
Percy Tarrant. J.H.Browne.
A.W.Parsons. A.M.Clausen
& Herbert Dicksee.



821

G79e

1887

16 Dec 29 M.A.S



he curfew tolls the knell of parting day.
The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

700679



"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day."

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that, from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.



Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;



How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour,-
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.



"No children run to kiss their sire's return."

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

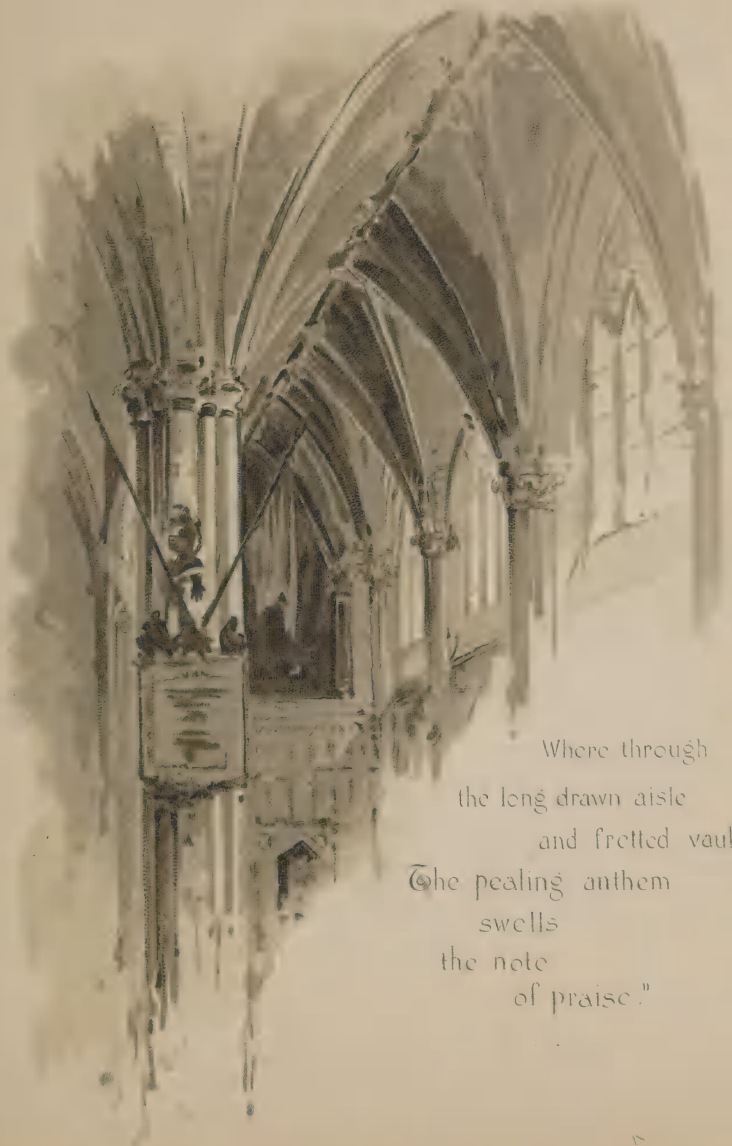
Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?



"If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise."

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire,
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstacy the living lyre:

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll,
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.



Where through
the long drawn aisle
and fretted vault
The pealing anthem
swells
the note
of praise."

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear,
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.





Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast,
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,



"The dark unfathomed caves of ocean."

Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious Truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous Shame
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.



"far from the madding crowd."

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learned to stray,
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.



"Mindful
of the
unhoned dead."

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of the unhonored dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,-

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,-
"Oft have we seen him, at the peep of dawn,
Brushing, with hasty steps, the dew away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn;

"**T**here at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreaths its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that habbles by.





"Haply some heary headed swain may say."

" **H**ard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

" **O**ne morn I missed him on the 'customed hill,
Along the heath, and near his favorite tree,
Another came, nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;



"A youth to fortune and to fame unknown."



"**T**he next, with dirges due, in sad array,
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne;
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the day,
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

The Epitaph

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth,
A youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown:
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere;
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to misery (all he had,) a tear;
He gained from Heaven, (twas all he wished,) a friend.



N

o farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose.)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

The End.



